



the tech

2014 IN REVIEW



EDITOR'S NOTE

The end of a year is a notoriously arbitrary occasion for reflection, and the end of a volume of *The Tech* is perhaps an even weirder time for contemplation. But my yearlong term as editor in chief tied me to the news at MIT — stories that were by turns surprising, bizarre, and heartbreaking — so this seems to me an apt opportunity to look back.

Though 2014 thankfully lacked any singular event like the marathon bombings and subsequent murder of Officer Sean Collier in April 2013, MIT once again saw more than its share of tragedy. We lost graduate students Hadi Kasab, Eliana Hechter, Kaitlin Goldstein, and Austin Travis this year, as well as professor Seth Teller, sophomore Phoebe Wang, and other members of the

MIT community. Every death in the extended MIT family takes a toll, but students, faculty, administrators, and others made special efforts this past fall to open doors and come together in response to so much sad news.

Some of the news this year was simply strange. Another fall at a fraternity — this time LCA — resulted in minor injuries and a new, shorter-lived party ban, paralleling the similar outcome of an incident at Phi Sig one year before. Hopefully this streak is broken in 2015. Professor Jonathan Gruber became the unlikely subject of a political firestorm, and the MIT football team turned heads with an unexpected string of hard-earned wins that propelled them two games into the Division III playoffs.

Both surprising and troubling was Walter Lewin's fall from grace — the once-revered

emeritus professor was found to have used his position as an edX instructor to carry out disturbing sexual harassment. It was a jarring development to the many students who first came to know classical mechanics or even the name of MIT through his lectures, but the severity of his offense is clear.

The conversation around sexual misconduct came to the forefront at the Institute in 2014. The sexual assault survey released last year, in many ways the first of its kind, revealed that MIT is not immune to the challenges facing universities across the nation. Many of the survey results, including the 17 percent of female undergrads who said they experienced behavior defined as sexual assault, approach worrisome national rates.

I was proud to see discussion of this topic in the pages of *The Tech*. Survivors of sexual abuse bravely shared their stories, and advo-

cates and allies challenged the community to hold itself to a higher standard. I was also glad to see students and faculty speak out on other important issues, from a more inclusive graduation invocation, to justice for undocumented immigrants, to an examination of racial biases at MIT following national attention to the Michael Brown and Eric Garner cases.

It's sometimes hard to tell what matters to MIT students. Some of the news I found most striking barely got noticed, while seemingly clear-cut stories ignited controversy. But I think that somewhere amid the late nights, formulaic briefs, and urgent updates that keep our paper running, we all hope students care about what happens to their community. *The Tech* plans to be a part of whatever events and conversations will define 2015, and we hope you do too.

—Austin Hess
Volume 134 Editor in Chief

OPINION IN REVIEW

From specific changes to Institute policy to analysis of the evolving relationship between students and the administration, opinion contributors explored a wide range of issues relevant to the MIT community in 2014.

The year was also marked by a sustained discussion of sexual misconduct

at MIT. In February, columns by four undergraduates implored the community to acknowledge that rape culture is a real problem at the Institute and laid out suggestions for combating it. A few months later, MIT released the results of a survey on sexual misconduct, along with additional recommendations and

policy changes. The Tech argued that while these plans had admirable intentions, meaningful change would only come with a level of student participation rarely seen before. Through the efforts of numerous student groups and other organizations, that participation seems to still be taking shape.

As we look ahead to 2015, we hope that discussion of these issues and many more will continue to be productive, that the community will actively seek to keep itself informed, and that those who care will continue to speak up.

—Jacob London
Opinion Editor

How fraternities should move forward

By Akil J. Middleton

Editor's Note: This column originally ran in the October 7, 2014 issue of The Tech.

Austin Hess's column last Tuesday, "Can fraternities be feminist?" struck a chord with not just me but with many of my colleagues who volunteer for the Association of Independent Living Groups (AILG). Mr. Hess posed a number of questions to the MIT fraternity community that desperately need to be addressed. Although there has been discussion on the various AILG email lists, the column made us realize that there should be a more public statement from a fraternity man. As I am six years removed from undergrad — long enough to know the ropes of being an alum but still able to relate and connect to my active brothers and their experiences — I believe I have a relevant perspective to offer on this situation.

But first, a disclaimer: Although I'd like to say that I speak on behalf of all fraternity alumni, this just wouldn't be true. Our alumni body is huge, and — much like the Forbes column that started all of this — one person cannot possibly be expected to represent all of us. But instead of speaking for everyone, perhaps I can speak to everyone in the hopes of starting a more productive conversation than the one in which we are currently engaged.

Fraternities have not been getting good national or local press as of late, and the Forbes column did us no favors. At MIT we like to say that we are different from the "stereotypical image of the state school frat," but some of the responses to the column cast serious doubt on that claim. Gentlemen, there have been a number of serious indictments made against us over the past few weeks related to how we treat and think about women, and the role of alumni in our community. If we do not address these then the public will interpret that silence

as a sign that we don't really care about these charges, and I guarantee that will make every-thing more difficult for us in the long run.

Let us look into the mirror and ask ourselves two questions. One, are we guilty as charged when it comes to our treatment of women? I really want to assure Mr. Hess by telling him that the majority is not. Because we are MIT students and alums, we are the most educated people in the world in the year 2014, and it goes without saying that discrimination is dumb and sexual assault is a crime and victim blaming is a scummy thing to do. At least, I want to believe this. If I am wrong, then we have deep problems. Deep problems that include failing to live up to the standards of our organizations, totally lying about being respectable and gentlemen and the like, and being completely at odds with the modern world.

And two, is there a problem with the current state of alumni advising? Mr. Hess asks: "How often are such views perpetuated in new member education programs, or by alumni who should be serving as mentors?" At my chapter we have a refrain that goes: "When you graduate, leave the house better than how you found it." This cannot happen if alums refuse to acknowledge how much culture and standards have changed since they walked the Infinite. We cannot keep our undergrads reliving our pasts; instead we must synthesize our lessons learned with their current experiences to create advice that is appropriate for today. And realize how bad misguided advice looks: even affiliated undergrads have started questioning the necessity of the fraternity alumni organization if the volunteers hold antiquated views.

The fact that those questions need to be asked at all is incredibly damning. The events

of the last few weeks have informed me — all of us — that we need to reflect on our actions and have a conversation. Gents, I am tired of hearing veiled attacks against victims. I am tired of seeing statistics that fraternity men are three times more likely to rape than unaffiliated men. And I am tired of having to hesitate before I praise the progressiveness of our community, making sure some screw-up won't leave me with egg on my face. So let's take Mr. Hess's advice and do something about it.

As I am not a government I cannot mandate anything concrete, as Mr. Hess suggests. Nevertheless, allow me to present some aspirational action items that will perhaps push the relevant Councils, Boards, and individuals into motion:

To undergraduate fraternity men: Let's ensure that we are building a welcoming community for men and women on campus. Support the IFC in its plans, but understand that true action and change go beyond PartySafePlus. Let's realize that misogyny hurts us too, as it makes us look incompetent ("We can't possibly screen drunk girls!") and unable to control our impulses (saying "She made me do it!" is never an excuse). Let's understand that contrary to what Reddit and tumblr would have us believe, "feminism" does not mean "praise women / down with men"; being a feminist just means you support equality — like when it comes to kicking out both unruly male and female guests, for example — which is an ideal we all should be striving for in 2014.

To my fellow alums: We are not under IFC or even AILG control, but our actions still have consequences. Let's consider the full scope of these before acting on behalf of MIT or our organizations, especially because the undergrads — not us — have to deal with the bulk of the fallout. Let's remember that although our experiences during our time here were meaningful, student culture, student mindsets, and society

EDITORIAL

Fighting sexual assault can't be optional for MIT students

Editor's Note: This column originally ran in the October 31, 2014 issue of The Tech.

On Monday, MIT released detailed results of a survey designed to investigate the scope and nature of sexual misconduct in our community. The survey is a rare quantitative examination of sexual assault at colleges — in several ways the first of its kind among MIT's peer institutions — and is a true example of bold leadership by the MIT administration and chancellor. And the data and resulting action plan were released with public honesty in a time when many colleges across the country seem to be primarily trying to avoid the issue.

The summary of the results forces us to confront difficult truths about our community. Thirty-five percent and 14 percent of female and male undergraduate respondents indicated that they had experienced a form of unwanted sexual behavior while at MIT, respectively. And 17 percent of female undergraduate respondents indicated that they had experienced behavior defined as rape or sexual assault under conditions of force, threat, or incapacitation.

But there is another difficult fact that the survey and the administration haven't seemed to acknowledge: the success of the administration's proposals will require a level of student involvement that we simply haven't seen before.

The administration leaves no doubt that it hopes these results will spur a campus-wide dialogue and that students will take the lead in many of the proposed projects. But without robust participation from the student body, these proposals will not be effective.

Community forums and requests for feedback won't be productive unless students submit thoughtful suggestions. Increased provision of educational services won't have a strong effect if students don't

take them seriously. A new peer mentoring program won't get off the ground without competent student leadership.

Moreover, students can shape the content and delivery of these services in order to maximize their reach and legitimacy. Residence-based programs offer residential governments an opportunity to take the lead in working with the administration to shape these programs and substantially improve the lives of their dorm-mates.

The administration is right — there is only so much they can do, and any meaningful decline in the troubling rates of sexual assault will require hard work by students to combat the most perverse aspects of their own culture. But it remains to be seen whether the MIT student population is up to this task.

Many MIT students too often pride themselves on a myopic focus on their technical work, even going so far as to deride peer institutions where students study the "less legitimate" subjects of history, politics, and gender studies and where student activism is prevalent rather than rare.

Of course, MIT students have mobilized for change when incensed. But here at The Tech, where we are often well-positioned to observe campus dialogue, it seems that student outrage, surprise, or even general concern about the rate of sexual assault at our school doesn't even approach that expressed over such issues as mandatory dining plans, residential security changes, or mural policies. Indeed, it seems the predominant narrative around the survey's release is external praise for MIT's boldness in issuing the survey rather than student dismay at its results.

The cultures of many of our peer institutions are permeated by a basic literacy about and deep concern for these issues. That is not the case here. Sadly, MIT is the type of place where community and political discussions

are seen as optional. It is also a place where the term "rape culture" is often used as a punchline for a strawman of feminism. But it's hard to find a better term to describe a place where 40 percent of respondents don't disagree with the statement that "rape and sexual assault happen because people put themselves in bad situations" and when 72 percent of those responding that they had experienced unwanted sexual behavior indicated that it came from another MIT student.

These are deficiencies in our culture, and it's hard to imagine that efforts led by a small group of passionate students and administrators will move the needle on an overwhelmingly apathetic campus. After all, the survey results provide ample evidence that many students don't take the problem as seriously as student leaders and administrators do, and some have downright regressive views. It is hard to expect releasing the results to change that fact. We do not want to be defeatist, but we do think we need a more frank discussion of the magnitude of action required.

We also call on the administration to more seriously consider what will be necessary to effect change given the current student climate. The aversion to heavy-handed, top-down policies is commendable and a valuable heuristic. But the administration should also not shy away from opportunities to strongly urge or even require students to take specific actions.

We understand that the administration will continue to expand and update its plans in the near future. But we would like to take this opportunity to encourage decision-makers to be as bold in their future proposals as they were in issuing the survey.

To quote President Reif, sexual assault "has no place here." The administration is aware of the fact that it has more to do. But if the entire effort is to have a chance at success, students cannot opt out of this conversation — and that's on us.



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Changes to drug & alcohol policies inconsistent and irrational

By Aaron Hammond
STAFF COLUMNIST

Editor's Note: This column originally ran in the September 5, 2014 issue of The Tech.

I suppose I was a bit too optimistic after hearing of changes to the Mind and Hand Book, especially of those relating to the Institute's drug and alcohol policies. Given MIT's apparent willingness to support policies consistent with the prevailing trend on college campuses to support harm-reduction with the adoption of a Good Samaritan policy for alcohol-related medical emergencies in February 2013, I had hoped, briefly, that the recent revisions would tackle the issue of substance abuse in a consistent and rational way.

Nope. Instead, the updates proffered by Dean Colombo and the Division of Student Life seek to force students to police their fellow students, while simultaneously omitting the protections that ought to be extended to those acting in good faith for the health of their peers.

First, I think we, administration included, must admit that drug use on campus is inevitable. According to the 2012 National Survey

on Drug Use and Health, 22% of full-time college students admit to the use of illicit drugs. Combined with the non-zero rate of drug use at those institutions with even the most draconian of policies (Brigham Young University reported 120 instances of disciplinary action stemming from substance abuse in 2011 and 2012), it is simply indefensible to believe that any amount of administrative intervention can drive the rate of substance abuse to zero.

Considering this reality, the response most appropriate to curb irresponsible use of drugs and alcohol is to focus on health and harm-reduction. Considering also that harm-reduction strategies specifically aimed at alcohol have been effective on many campuses nationwide, it seems absurd that the same approach would not be applied to the use of illicit drugs as well.

The recent changes to the Mind and Hand Book do not fall in line with this common-sense strategy, specifically in the realm of drug use. By threatening "disciplinary suspension and disciplinary expulsion... when a student has failed to summon medical assistance for someone... in medical jeopardy due to alcohol or substance use," the DSL is requiring that students, under pain of sanction, act responsibly under duress, which is

certainly something to be lauded.

However, as noted in The Tech's news article about the policy changes, the same protections that exist to shield those acting responsibly in cases of alcohol abuse do not apply to those seeking help for drug-related medical emergencies. That is, the Institute is presently forcing students to police without a Kevlar vest. Although the article notes that Associate Dean Judy Robinson offered the tepid reassurance that "the fact that someone called for help may be taken into account if Committee on Discipline sanctions were considered after a drug-related incident," an unofficial wink-and-nod is insufficient in discussions of a topic so serious.

Taken together with the introduction of a policy that holds students responsible for drug use undertaken in their residence by other students, a tragic hypothetical emerges: Suppose that I hold a gathering with some of my chums on a Saturday night. Some of us are underage, but we are all nonetheless consuming alcoholic beverages (while not playing Settlers of Catan, as drinking games are now expressly prohibited). Another one of our of-age hall mates walks into the room with some other beverage, which I can reasonably assume is alcohol. Some time later,

he passes out, as his drink in fact contained GBL.

The revisions to the Mind and Hand Book now place me in an awfully precarious spot; should I call a transport, I may be held responsible for permitting drug use and underage drinking in my room, and if I do not and he experiences a medical emergency, I will also be punished for failing to report the incident. After a few drinks, the reasonable solution may well appear to be to haul him back to his room and hope for the best. It should be noted that, if he had instead consumed only alcohol, I would be protected by the Good Samaritan policy and there would be no hesitation in calling for medical assistance. Inconsistency abounds.

I can appreciate the fact that the Institute wishes to take a hardline approach to drug use as to appear as to not condone it. It is reasonable that the administration should want to curb the use of illicit substances on campus and its consequent ill effects on student life. But, the exclusion of a Good Samaritan policy for incidents involving drugs does not further that end. Instead, it runs counter to the very idea that the reason for a drug and alcohol policy in the first place is to protect students.

Enhancing student impact on community decisions

By John W. Halloran Jr.

Editor's Note: This column originally ran in the March 7, 2014 issue of The Tech.

After Bexley Hall closed last May, members of the dorm united to express a desire for students to have a meaningful voice throughout any remaining developments related to the dorm. Unfortunately, now, in Spring 2014, far too much time has passed without engaged student discourse on the future of the Bexley space. This void highlights a failure on the part of the administration, student leaders, and the entire student body to foster an open, proactive dialogue. Besides simply acknowledging this failure, let's recognize the Undergraduate Association (UA) elections as a chance to remedy it.

According to an article in the Feb. 28 issue of The Tech, despite the inclusion of students on a committee meant to provide counsel on decisions regarding Bexley's fate, undergraduate members on the advisory group felt they had been effectively shut out of the decision-making process.

More specifically, students in the advisory group were charged with several tasks, including "recommending criteria for the design and programming of a possible replacement and advising the Institute on appropriate next steps."

But although other issues regarding Bexley were discussed openly with students, according to the advisory group, this specific issue was never discussed, nor was the advisory group "consulted on the recommendation made by facilities to demolish the dorm." The meetings only discussed "structural issues" and the final decision was made "outside the group" by Dean Constantino Colombo, then-Chancellor Eric Grimson PhD '80, and others according to Kristjan E. Kaseniit '14.

Furthermore, an email from Dean Colombo, who chaired the Bexley Advisory

Group, was cited in the article stating, "[t]he recommendation to demolish the building was made to the Institute's senior leadership based on information from Facilities' extensive investigations of the building."

Now that it appears that this decision has been reached without substantial student input, it is even more crucial that we as a student body ensure our role in future decisions. Here I must point out recent efforts on the part of the UA Committee on Student-Administrator Collaboration. The committee, comprised of representatives of Dormitory Council (DormCon), the UA, Interfraternity Council (IFC), and Panhellenic Association (Panhel), is currently drafting a report on the state of student-administration collaboration. Hopefully it produces actionable recommendations.

Despite this potential improvement, this issue highlights recurring problems in the way the voice of the undergraduate student body is expressed, harnessed, and received by MIT student leaders and the administration. Student impact must be measured by more than just how many students sit on Institute committees. And unfortunately, the recent Bexley development is one of many instances where students were not satisfied with the strength of their collective voice.

I offer a critique of both the administration and student leaders to elucidate failures in the campus policy process. In some cases, the MIT administration has failed to allow meaningful contributions from students. In others, student leaders have failed to properly engage the student body, or an apathetic student body has failed to hold these leaders accountable.

Kaseniit's recounting of the press release accidentally shared with the Bexley Advisory Group provides compelling evidence that undergraduates are not intimately involved in the campus policy process, due to some de-

gree of exclusion on the part of the administration. Whether or not this exclusion was intentional is hard to know. But considering the administration had already decided to pursue the demolition Bexley without consulting the student members of the group, clearly the students on this committee only had nominal influence.

Another hindrance of meaningful student contribution was the confidentiality of committees. Students were often told not discuss items from committee meetings with other students. How can student leaders on these committees form representative opinions without interaction with the rest of the student body? In an environment of supposedly ubiquitous collaboration, representatives on committees are deprived of the true potential of feedback from others. As a result of this lack of transparency and accountability, it is hard to expect students to have a real impact on decisions.

We should also question why little initiative was taken to address these students' apparent lack of influence. Perhaps Bexley's longstanding estrangement from the UA and DormCon tied the hands of student leaders. But even if this was the case, the UA is our most established form of student representation, and it should have been able to do more on behalf of its constituents.

But ultimately, we can't simply blame the administration and student leaders. A large portion of MIT students remain apathetic to the internal politics of the Institute, even those that affect them, and therefore deprive the student body as a whole of meaningful impact on MIT's policies. We need student leaders to continue to prioritize the quality of undergraduate contributions on these committees, but we cannot expect them to do so in a climate of student apathy. Our leaders are only effective if we stand behind them and hold them accountable.

Past student leaders have not done enough

to actually engage the student body throughout the school year. Although the UA has made attempts like speeches, newsletters, and study breaks, it has a spotty record of effectively mobilizing campus opinion at crucial moments. Widespread apathy is both a contributor to, and product of, ineffective leadership.

In one recent divergence from this pattern of poor responsiveness, I applaud UA President Sidhanth P. Rao '14 and Vice President Devin T. Cornish '14 and others who rallied against the proposed 1 a.m. rule for Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) when traditional communication avenues failed. Widespread campus engagement led directly to policy changes by the Institute to address student concerns. I hope they continue to push to solve any remaining issues since the most recent compromise on the matter.

But the failure of the Bexley Advisory Group to be supported by student leaders and the rest of the undergraduate population is still a strong counterexample to the CPW success. The public disclosure of the Bexley group's lack of influence by way of an article in The Tech four months later indicates weak leadership around a noticeably controversial topic.

Looking ahead, these events should inform the way students evaluate the candidacies of potential student leaders. The next UA President and Vice President will have a chance to work with administrators who are still relatively new to their current roles, including President L. Rafael Reif, Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD '88, and Provost Martin Schmidt PhD '88. As we choose our next student leaders, let's make sure to consider not just candidates' experience and personalities, but also their specific plans to re-engage the student body and ensure a vibrant and influential undergraduate voice.

John W. Halloran Jr. is a member of the Class of 2015.

The right (and wrong) reasons to buy into Bitcoin

By Jacob London
OPINION EDITOR

Editor's Note: This column originally ran in the November 4, 2014 issue of The Tech.

This past Sunday marked the launch of the MIT Bitcoin Project, a study conducted by faculty and students from the Media Lab, Sloan, and the MIT Bitcoin Club. The study aims to understand how the digital currency proliferates after being distributed to potential users.

The project's creators have put MIT at the forefront of an effort that they believe has vast innovative potential. But Bitcoin's fate doesn't rest solely on the soundness of the currency itself. It will also depend on public perception and proponents' ability to effectively advocate for it.

The leaders of the MIT Bitcoin Project emphasize the right reasons for trying the currency. They highlight low transaction costs, enhanced security relative to current online payment systems, and the potential to help those who are "underserved" by our financial system. But other Bitcoin advocates are promoting the currency for the wrong reasons, focusing on unjustified fears of the state and central banking systems.

More specifically, some say the widespread

adoption of Bitcoin is essential in order to free society from the grip of bureaucrats and central bankers. This same strain of techno-libertarians also incites fear of hyperinflation of the U.S. dollar at the hands of the federal reserve. But inflation has actually slowed since the Fed began the first round of quantitative easing in 2008, and has remained low.

A similar argument for the widespread adoption of Bitcoin is that the collapse of the US dollar is imminent. Observers point to the fact that the dollar, like most other modern currencies, derives its value by fiat — faith in the government that issued it — rather than a commodity with inherent value. Additionally, the sheer quantity of printed dollars in the world has convinced many that the dollar will lose value as a result of excessive supply.

But according to Federal Reserve data, in 2013, roughly two-thirds of the hundred-dollar bills in circulation were held outside the United States, indicating that the dollar is still the global reserve currency. This distinction makes it difficult to believe that the dollar will collapse any time soon. The strength of a currency ultimately depends on the degree to which people trust it, and no other country or credit union can match the track record of the United States when it comes to fulfilling its debt obliga-

tions. The European Central Bank has not been around as long as the Federal Reserve, and it is still recovering from a crisis that began in 2009. The Chinese yuan is restrained by stringent and clouded government control.

Another paranoid argument for Bitcoin's necessity is that it will protect assets when governments inevitably attempt mass seizures of private savings accounts. Those who make this point refer to the recent financial crisis in Cyprus. Faced with the prospect of insolvency, and without assurance of a bailout from the European Union, Cypriot lawmakers proposed the confiscation of six to seven percent of individuals' private savings accounts. As news of this proposal spread, the price of Bitcoin skyrocketed, quite understandably. But in the face of vigorous public backlash, the Cypriot government backed away from the proposal.

To suggest that the United States could face a similar scenario — and that the government would attempt to confiscate private savings — is as misleading as it is far-fetched. Only a national emergency threatening the very survival of the republic could conceivably prompt the U.S. government to contemplate confiscating property on a national scale — for example, to mobilize resources for a global war effort. Under any such scenario, Bitcoin users would be

no safer than ordinary bank account holders. The government could and likely would criminalize the failure to turn over assets needed for our national survival. Anyone foolish enough to hoard assets in Bitcoin form would be no different than tax evaders and others whose attempts to hide assets can be prosecuted.

Nevertheless, just because there are some poor arguments for Bitcoin doesn't mean MIT students shouldn't try it out. But Bitcoin supporters like those behind the MIT Project, whose reasons for wanting Bitcoin to succeed are more sound, should be wary of the spread of techno-libertarian paranoia. Paranoid arguments detract from and undermine the arguments that have merit.

The fastest growing political affiliation on American college campuses is Libertarianism. Although much of Bitcoin's initial rise in popularity can be attributed to speculation, a growing portion of users are attracted to the currency because of their distrust of government. For these reasons, one can imagine that some MIT students who become interested in Bitcoin will do so because of misguided fear of the state.

We should not let this happen. Instead, let's write a different story about MIT students' sincere desire to explore the positive potential of an innovative new way to pay and save.

A YEAR IN COMICS

Q.E.D. COMMENCEMENT ISSUE

WHAT IT IS...

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

WHAT IT IS...

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

WHAT IT IS...

WHAT IT TOTALLY IS

BY ERIKA TRENT

SKETCHY

by Dohyun LEE

-PUDDLES

HA !!!!

YAH !!!

THAT WAS AN INTENSE BATTLE, YOU PUDDLES !

TECH SHUTTLE

DOH

10 1 2014

2016

2020

2025

Victory!

Construction has successfully eliminated all student activity at MIT.

Next House is the Madagascar of MIT.

Pigeon Comics

The only entrance is at the front of the Classroom!

I'm gonna look bad walking in so late

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

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Somewhere on the Search for Meaning...

by Letitia Li

I'll never pass quals... I should have taken different classes...

...never stopped studying... gone to a different school...

Even if you could do it over again...

...would you really want to give up everything you've been through these last years?

You're the worst scientist to walk under the dome!

Oh without a doubt...

Please help me

I'm so lost.

Are you sure you took the pre-req?

It's ok.

I'm here.

You're a grad student. It's your problem.

What was the admissions committee thinking?

Because I l-

...definitely not.

UPPERCUT by Steve Sullivan

OH NO. THIS GUY IS BAD NEWS.

WHAT? WHY?

HE DOESN'T KNOW THE SANDWICHES, AND HIS HEARING ISN'T GREAT.

I USUALLY JUST AGREE TO WHATEVER HE SAYS TO GET THROUGH THE LINE.

COULD I HAVE THE BLT?

TURKEY SANDWICH?

CHICKEN AND OREGANO?

WANT BANANA SLICES AND GREEN BEANS?

I'LL ADD MUSTARD, CUT IT INTO NINE PIECES?

COOL

NO, BACON, LETTUCE, TOMATO.

...YEAH. SURE.

OK.

JUST, UH... JUST HAM AND CHEESE.

WE ARE ALL OUT OF TORTILLAS.

STEVE SULLIVAN FEBRUARY 2014

ARTS IN REVIEW

As in previous years, Boston was a prominent center of eclectic and exciting cultural events in 2014. In addition to hosting internationally known musicians and performers, like St. Vincent, The Knife, and Lily Allen, it also allowed up-and-coming recording artists and singer-songwriters like Holly Herndon, MØ, and London Grammar to showcase their work to the city's concert-goers. Boston Calling, a musical festival that has now become the city's trademark event, brought many musicians in the spring and fall, bol-

stering Boston's cultural importance. Boston Ballet provided fans of ballet with versatile productions, from *Cinderella* and *Pricked to Jewels* and *Close to Chuck*. Those who appreciate theater and performance arts had many opportunities to see famous actors and performers, like Mikhail Baryshnikov, in Boston's theater centers. The city was also a hub for movie screenings — the most critically acclaimed movies of 2014, such as *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Birdman*, and *Boyhood*, attracted extra attention.

Though long known for its highly technical environment, MIT once again showed that its vibrant arts scene attracts worldwide attention. Joan Jonas, a professor emeritus at MIT, was chosen to represent United States at the 2015 Venice Biennale, an important, international contemporary art exhibition. Roomful of Teeth, a Grammy Award-winning vocal octet, premiered MIT lecturer Elena Ruehr's opera *Cassandra in the Temples* at Kresge Auditorium. MIT Open, the annual competitive ballroom dance competition organized by

MITBDT, brought former World Latin Dance Champions, Michael Malitowski and Joanna Leunis to Rockwell Cage. The Theater Department helped MIT host *Infinite Record: Archive, Memory, and Performance*, an international artistic research project led by Østfold University College/Norwegian Theatre Academy. And, as always, MIT's student groups offered various shows, including concerts, plays, and dance performances, to the local community. Denis Bozic
Arts Editor

The Tech's Best of 2014

This year, all departments of *The Tech* voted on the best movies, music albums, and TV shows of 2014. With a wide selection of best-of titles, from Oscar-nominated movies to lesser-known music albums and TV shows, *The Tech* presents its 2014 favorites in three different categories.

Deniz Bozic and Chennah Hezoor
Arts Editors

BEST MOVIES OF 2014

Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)

Directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu
Starring: Michael Keaton, Edward Norton, and Emma Stone



COURTESY OF FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

Michael Keaton as Riggan and Edward Norton as Mark in *Birdman*, one of the most critically acclaimed movies of the year.

Boyhood

Directed by Richard Linklater
Starring: Ellar Coltrane, Patricia Arquette, Lorelei Linklater, and Ethan Hawke

Captain America: The Winter Soldier

Directed by Anthony and Joe Russo
Starring: Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson, and Sebastian Stan

The Grand Budapest Hotel

Directed by Wes Anderson
Starring: Ralph Fiennes, F. Murray Abraham, and Tony Revolori

How to Train Your Dragon 2

Directed by Dean DeBlois
Starring: Jay Baruchel, Cate Blanchett, Gerard Butler, and America Ferrera

Interstellar

Directed by Christopher Nolan
Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway, and Michael Caine

Selma

Directed by Ava DuVernay
Starring: David Oyelowo, Tessa Thompson, Tom Wilkinson, and Lorraine Toussaint

The Imitation Game

Directed by Morten Tyldum
Starring: Benedict Cumberbatch, Keira Knightley, and Matthew Goode

The Lego Movie

Directed by Phil Lord and Christopher Miller
Starring: Chris Pratt, Will Ferrell, and Elizabeth Banks

X-Men: Days of Future Past

Directed by Bryan Singer
Starring: Hugh Jackman, James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, and Jennifer Lawrence

BEST MUSIC ALBUMS OF 2014

2014 Forrest Hills, by J. Cole

Released: December 9, 2014
Record Label: Dreamville, Roc Nation, and Columbia Records.

Benji, by Sun Kil Moon

Released: February 11, 2014
Record Label: Caldo Verde Records

I Never Learn, by Lykke Li

Released: May 2, 2014
Record Label: LL Recordings and Atlantic Records

Music for the Uninvited, by Leon Vynehall

Released: March 17, 2014
Record Label: 3024

Nikki Nack, by tUnE-yArDs

Released: May 5, 2014
Record Label: 4AD

Run the Jewels 2, by Run the Jewels

Released: October 24, 2014
Record Label: Mass Appeal, Sony RED

St. Vincent, by St. Vincent

Released: February 24, 2014
Record Label: LomaVista/Republic



COURTESY OF RENATA RAKSHA

Annie Clark, also known as St. Vincent, whose 2014 self-titled album was praised by many music critics, performed in Boston's House of Blues on 27 Feb. 2014.

The Feast of the Broken Heart, by Hercules & Love Affair

Released: May 26, 2014
Record Label: Moshi Moshi

The Outsiders, by Eric Church

Released: February 11, 2014
Record Label: EMI Nashville

Too Bright, by Perfume Genius

Released: September 23, 2014
Record Label: Matador

BEST TV SHOWS OF 2014

Game of Thrones

Created by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss
Starring: Peter Dinklage, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, and Lena Headey



COURTESY OF HBO/MACALL B. POLAY

Emilia Clarke as Daenerys Targaryen in *Game of Thrones*, HBO's hit fantasy drama that continues to attract international acclaim.

House of Cards

Created by Beau Willimon
Starring: Kevin Spacey, Robin Wright, and Kate Mara

How to Get Away With Murder

Created by Peter Nowalk
Starring: Viola Davis, Billy Brown, and Alfred Enoch

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver

Created by HBO/John Oliver
Hosted by John Oliver

Parks and Recreation

Created by Greg Daniels and Michael Schur
Starring: Amy Poehler, Rashida Jones, and Aziz Ansari

Sherlock

Created by Mark Gatiss and Steven Moffat
Starring: Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman

The Good Wife

Created by Robert and Michelle King
Starring: Julianna Margulies, Matt Czuchy, and Archie Panjabi

The Legend of Korra

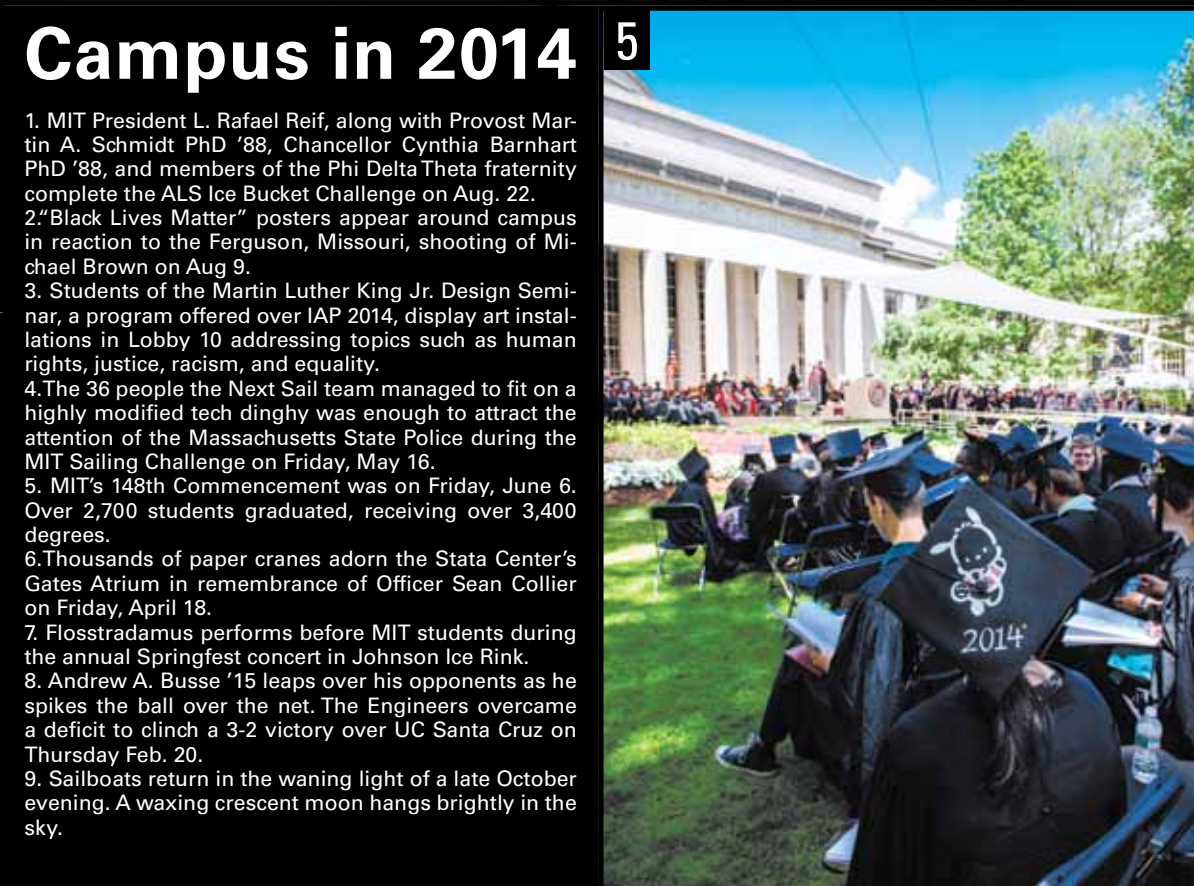
Created by Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko
Starring: Henry Rollins, Grey DeLisle, Bruce Davison, and Alyson Stoner

Transparent

Created by Jill Soloway
Starring: Jeffrey Tambor, Gaby Hoffmann, Jay Duplass, and Amy Landecker

True Detective

Created by Nic Pizzolatto
Starring: Matthew McConaughey, Woody Harrelson, and Michelle Monaghan



Campus in 2014

- MIT President L. Rafael Reif, along with Provost Martin A. Schmidt PhD '88, Chancellor Cynthia Barnhart PhD '88, and members of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity complete the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge on Aug. 22.
- "Black Lives Matter" posters appear around campus in reaction to the Ferguson, Missouri, shooting of Michael Brown on Aug. 9.
- Students of the Martin Luther King Jr. Design Seminar, a program offered over IAP 2014, display art installations in Lobby 10 addressing topics such as human rights, justice, racism, and equality.
- The 36 people the Next Sail team managed to fit on a highly modified tech dinghy was enough to attract the attention of the Massachusetts State Police during the MIT Sailing Challenge on Friday, May 16.
- MIT's 148th Commencement was on Friday, June 6. Over 2,700 students graduated, receiving over 3,400 degrees.
- Thousands of paper cranes adorn the Stata Center's Gates Atrium in remembrance of Officer Sean Collier on Friday, April 18.
- Flosstradamus performs before MIT students during the annual Springfest concert in Johnson Ice Rink.
- Andrew A. Busse '15 leaps over his opponents as he spikes the ball over the net. The Engineers overcame a deficit to clinch a 3-2 victory over UC Santa Cruz on Thursday Feb. 20.
- Sailboats return in the waning light of a late October evening. A waxing crescent moon hangs brightly in the sky.